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WEATHER AND THE SEASONS IN MICMAC MYTHOLOGY.

THE Micmacs relate that their hero, Glooscap, issued from a cave near Cape Dauphin, at the eastern extremity of Cape Breton. He instructed the people, travelled westward, and finally disappeared. But he is to return some day, issuing again from his eastern cave; so, at least, the Cape Breton Micmacs still believe. Such was his strength that he left his footprints imbedded in the solid rock at Blomidon. And the Passamaquoddies add that he was accompanied by two dogs, — one black, one white. Before his coming, the world was in darkness; he brought the light.

Surely it is evident that this is but one version of the world-wide story of the solar hero who comes forth from the cave of night, and returns to the shadows of the west to reappear at to-morrow's dawn, always accompanied by his two dogs day and night. But climate interferes to modify the story. In these northern latitudes the strength of the frost giants is seen to be quite as great as that of the solar warmth. Instead of constructing a distinctly dual system upon this basis of heat and cold, however, the Micmacs seem to have preferred to retain their hero's strength intact, or to sacrifice consistency to simplicity by giving him command over frost as well as sunshine. And so Glooscap is made to fight frost with frost, always conquering his adversaries at their own game; while, in another myth, with complete inconsistency, he releases the waters that have been imprisoned by the power of the winter. But the special Micmac ruler of the seasons is Coolpujot. It is said that Glooscap, when he departed, first went west, then turned southward, and kept travelling on and on until finally, far to the south, he came to the home of Coolpujot, an old man who dwells in solitude broken only by occasional visitors. His name, as Dr. Rand has shown, is translated "rolled over with handspikes." He is without bones, and his corpulence is so great that he lies upon the ground in one position, unable to move. Twice a year, in spring and autumn, he is turned over by visitors armed with handspikes, hence his name. And tradition has it that to whomsoever performs this kindly office he gratefully grants any request, however difficult of attainment. When he lies facing the north, his warm breath produces those balmy southern zephyrs which bring with them the song of birds, the perfume of flowers, and the wealth of summer vegetation. When he is turned towards the south, the birds and flowers follow, and the icy northern winds resume their sway.

Two men and a boy journeyed far to visit him. At length they

found him lying in his wigwam with his back towards them. He asked them to turn him over, so that he could see them. After a bounteous meal he inquired for what purpose they had come. The first man replied : "I am ill. I have come to ask you to cure me." "Turn me," said Coolpujot, "so that I can touch you where you feel ill." The man did so, and Coolpujot cured him instantly. "As long as you remember me," said he to his visitor, "you'll be well, but as soon as you forget me your illness will return." He then asked of the other man the object of his visit. "I seek success in hunting," answered the second man. "Replace all your old traps with new ones," said Coolpujot ; "then you will have success." The man afterwards did so, and found, like his companion, that his request had been granted. Now came the boy's turn. Said he to Coolpujot : "I would like to live with you always, to bring your water and tend your fire for you." "Then you shall be my boy, and stay with me forever," responded the magician, who thereupon directed the boy to place himself inside the hollow trunk of a cedar-tree which stood directly in front of the door of the wigwam. The boy, having done this, instantly became part of the tree. Every spring, as soon as he is turned to face the tree, Coolpujot looks at it and raises his hand. Immediately the fresh green foliage springs forth into full bloom. When autumn comes, before he turns his back upon the tree, he looks at it again and lowers his hand. Again the tree obeys his will, and its foliage withers and falls off nor is renewed until with returning spring the lord of the seasons again commands it to bud forth.

There are several points which may be thought worthy of notice about the legends thus far related. The cave birth of Glooscap will be recognized as a world-wide attribute of the solar gods and heroes, as might naturally be expected. The Micmacs believe there were three heroes in existence before Glooscap created man. These three were Glooscap, Coolpujot, and Keuhkw, ruler of earthquakes. But Glooscap, in various myths, invades the prerogative of both of his associates to such an extent that we are at least justified in suspecting that the three were once regarded as one being named in three differing aspects. Indeed, several Micmacs have assured me, in respect to Coolpujot, that he lived before any one else ; that he himself became Glooscap, and returned to his former position when his mission in the world had been accomplished. The three visitors in Dr. Rand's version are made to seek Glooscap instead of Coolpujot, thus showing an interchange of incidents between the two heroes. Again in these versions of the same collection the granting of requests is apparently Glooscap's exclusive prerogative.

But it is to the incident of the cedar-tree and the renewal of its

verdure by the ruler of the seasons that I especially desire to call attention. This concept may possibly be held to be vaguely suggestive of the famous "flower-pot trick," of the knowledge of which there is evidence amongst the medicine-men of the Zuñi and other tribes. But, passing over this, we find a very natural source for the connection between trees and the seasons in Indian mythology, not only in their changing foliage, but also in the shadows which they cast, and by means of which many of the Micmacs are still able to tell the time of day in the forest with marked accuracy. This recalls the manner in which the Micmacs divide a tree from which medicinal slips are to be taken into four quarters, according as they face the morning or afternoon sun, or the portions remaining in shadow. Again, in a Micmac myth collected by Dr. Rand, the two weasel girls, who visit the star world, afterwards descend upon the top of a pine-tree, and while they remain upon it four animals pass by. Each announces his proper mating season. First the moose names autumn, then the bear names spring. Next the marten names early spring, but I understand that late winter would be quite as appropriate. Last of all comes the badger,¹ who names no season, but the girls promise to become his wives in what is then evidently the summer season, for they are described as sleeping under the starry sky after digging ground-nuts. They then descend from the tree. In the version of this legend which I have obtained, the two weasel girls pass four more animals while being paddled down stream in a canoe by the loon and the wood-duck. These animals are named as the caribou, bear, beaver, and muskrat, varieties whose habits bear the same relation to the seasons, if I am correctly informed, and are named in the same order, as the four animals in Dr. Rand's version. Curiously enough, these animals are called the four dogs of the loon, and the loon is the special messenger of Glooscap. This suggests the annual Seneca festival at which four dogs were sacrificed, each being suspended from an arm of a cross. When we recall that the cross is throughout America the symbol of the cardinal points and seasons, as Dr. Brinton and others have shown, we may well suspect that the association of the four dogs or animals with the seasons in the Micmac myth is not a chance affair. But, not to wander farther, I may add that in another curious Micmac myth in my collection the hero is said to drive two wizards out of a pine-tree, and a contest follows. One wizard is half red, half black; the other is half blue, half yellow. Are these the colors of the cardinal points and seasons among the Micmacs? An Ojibwa myth related by Mr. H. I. Smith contains the dragon in a tree, and he is slain by another animal,

¹ It may be noted in passing that the badger is the symbol of summer amongst the Zuñis, according to Mr. Cushing.

which is revived by the sacrifice of six dogs. Schoolcraft's Algonkin legend should also be mentioned, in which Osseo, son of the evening star, while inclosed in a log, overcomes the power of an evil star, and regains his youth. Moreover, an Ottawa myth given by the same author, although corrupted by evidently modern interpolations, describes the journey of five men and a boy to the home of the sun. On the way they meet the mighty hero, Manabozho. Two ask for eternal life, and one is transformed to a cedar-tree. Immediately after, the sun is described as dividing day and night into the same four portions marked upon the Micmac medicinal tree. It seems, therefore, that the tree is used in Indian mythology as the symbol of time or the seasons.

Pierrot Clemeau, a famous Micmac story-teller, asserts that his tribe has always been able to control its weather supply by the appropriate use of certain legends. His directions are as follows: To bring rain or warm weather, talk of whales, or relate a legend describing the migration of the birds and the alternations of the seasons. Such is the curious confusion of cause and effect. Several other legends will produce a like result, and in general any discussion of old times has a tendency to cause wet weather. To bring cold or dry weather, amongst several legends that of Umtil, or Fair Weather, is especially efficacious. This personage was a strong and handsome chief who dwelt with his two sisters. He was a great hunter, and often remained away from his wigwam for days at a time. Sometimes, when he returned, his sisters used to hang up his moccasins just outside the camp, and whenever they did so a frost was certain to occur. As long as he remained at home the weather would be calm and beautiful whatever the season, but as soon as he left the storms would return. This legend was first related to me by Newell Glode, who said that he had heard it, when a child, from the lips of a very old squaw. It suggests another, in which the rainbow is called Glooscap's carrying strap. When he is at home he hangs it upon the sky, that men may know that all is well. This is especially interesting because it identifies Glooscap with the Invisible Boy of Dr. Rand's legends, who, in turn, represents the moose or sky god. The same idea appears in the Zuni representation of the rainbow as the handle of a prayer-meal bowl. As to the Fair Weather legend, a hero upon the Pacific coast is said to bring fair weather or storms by putting on or removing a magical hat.

When we turn to Micmac thunder legends, we meet with some more familiar features. The thunders are seven flying rattlesnakes who dwell in the west under a mountain seven miles high. They cause the thunder by crying to each other, and rattling their tails as they fly across the sky. For every now and then they mount to the

top of the mountain in the west, put on a magic cloak called *minoos*, and start out through the air hunting serpents, which with frogs form their only food. Their sight is so strong that they can perceive the serpents hiding in the ground under trees. Then they leap upon their victims, cutting them into pieces, and we see the flash of the lightning. Having quickly collected their prey, they return to their homes on the third or seventh day. In the latter period they pass over the entire world.

Thus we find amongst the Micmacs the same cloud serpent which is so conspicuous in the mythology of the southern tribes, but here it plays a subordinate rôle. This myth seems to have been generally known amongst the Algonkin tribes. Analogous concepts are also reported by Dr. Brinton amongst the Iroquois and Shawnees.

As for Micmac weather proverbs, I have learned but three : If the stars appear closer together than usual, there will be a storm. If partridge feathers grow long, there will be a severe winter. When fireflies first appear, birch bark will peel well.

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